

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries complete applicable sections)

STATE:

Oklahoma

COUNTY:

Cherokee

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:

Murrell House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

Murrell House; Hunter's Home

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

N/2 Section 22, T 16 N, R 22 E

CITY OR TOWN:

Park Hill (4 miles south of Tahlequah)

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:

STATE

Oklahoma

CODE

COUNTY:

Cherokee

CODE

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

(Check One)

- ☐ District ☒ Building
☐ Site ☐ Structure
☐ Object

OWNERSHIP

- ☒ Public
☐ Private
☐ Both

Public Acquisition:

- ☐ In Process
☐ Being Considered

STATUS

- ☒ Occupied
☐ Unoccupied
☐ Preservation work
in progress

ACCESSIBLE
TO THE PUBLIC

- Yes:
☐ Restricted
☒ Unrestricted
☐ No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- ☐ Agricultural ☐ Government ☐ Park ☐ Transportation ☐ Comments
☐ Commercial ☐ Industrial ☐ Private Residence ☐ Other (Specify)
☐ Educational ☐ Military ☐ Religious
☐ Entertainment ☒ Museum ☐ Scientific

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:

Parks Division, Industrial Development and Parks Department,
State of Oklahoma

STREET AND NUMBER:

500 Will Rogers Building

CITY OR TOWN:

Oklahoma City

STATE:

Oklahoma

CODE

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:

Parks Division; State of Oklahoma

STREET AND NUMBER:

500 Will Rogers Building

CITY OR TOWN:

Oklahoma City

STATE

Oklahoma

CODE

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

Murrell Home

DATE OF SURVEY:

1948

☐ Federal☒ State☐ County☐ Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

Parks Division, State of Oklahoma

STREET AND NUMBER:

500 Will Rogers Building

CITY OR TOWN:

Oklahoma City

STATE:

Oklahoma

CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE

COUNTY

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Murrell House at Park Hill, Oklahoma, is of a Federal style common in the Virginia piedmont from where the original builder and owner, George M. Murrell, moved. Built in 1845, the house displays the elegance surrounding the more prominent figures of the Cherokee community.

A two-story frame and weatherboarded house on a stone foundation, the residence is five bays wide with wood-shingled hip roof and inside end chimneys. The shuttered windows with cornices have double-hung sash 6/6 lights. A pedimented gallery protects a front door with fanlight and sidelights.

A central hall with open well stairway of two flights divides two front parlors. Behind the parlor to the left is a dining room with enclosed straight stairway to the second floor and basement. Behind the dining room is a kitchen with a straight stairway to servants' quarters on a second floor. The right front parlor is divided from the rear room by an intervening breezeway, which turns out to a porch which runs around the rear of the center section of the house and returns to the other side. The second floor is basically a central hall plan, two rooms to each side.

The house has a dug cellar for wines and vegetables, a smokehouse, and springhouse. Native stone was cut for the foundation, native timber for the studding, and hand-hewn oak for the lath. The interior is well appointed with original fixtures and woodwork.

Since the purchase by the State of Oklahoma in 1948, the house has been restored to something approaching its former elegance. Fireplace facings have been cleaned and repaired, along with woodwork, doors, cabinets, and floors. Walls have been cleaned and some new wallpaper hung. Through gifts of family members, many of the original furnishings have been returned. The house is owned by the Oklahoma State Parks Department and is open to the public.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Pre-Columbian☐ 16th Century☐ 18th Century☐ 20th Century☐ 15th Century☐ 17th Century☒ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Aboriginal☐ Education☒ Political☐ Urban Planning☐ Prehistoric☐ Engineering☐ Religion/Phi-☐ Other (Specify)☒ Historic☐ Industry

osophy

☐ Agriculture☐ Invention☐ Science☐ Architecture☐ Landscape☐ Sculpture☐ Art

Architecture

☐ Social/Human-☐ Commerce☐ Literature

itarian

☐ Communications☐ Military☐ Theater☐ Conservation☐ Music☐ Transportation

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

At the end of the "Trail of Tears," in Oklahoma, the Cherokees chose a site for their new capital and named it Tahlequah. Torn by factional disputes and struggling for existence while the Federal Government delayed in compensating them for their former property, they nevertheless began rebuilding their nation and their culture. In Georgia the Cherokee people accomplished what "seemed to be a cultural and ethnological phenomenon--a primitive people changing into a civilized nation in two generations."¹ The Cherokees brought with them to Oklahoma a civilization with a high educational level, a bilingual standard, and a government modeled after that of the United States.

Park Hill, an area 4 miles south of Tahlequah, quickly became the religious, cultural, and social center of the newly removed nation. Today, the Murrell House is the sole remaining structure illustrating the anglicized lifestyle and culture of Park Hill society, transplanted to the frontier by Cherokee leaders.

George Murrell of Virginia married John Ross' niece, Minerva, and came with the Ross family to Oklahoma in the fall of 1840. In 1845 he completed construction of this two-story frame house built of native timber and furnished from France. During the Civil War the Cherokee factions divided their allegiance between the North and South and this area was the scene of skirmishes and vandalism. The Murrell House was the only antebellum house that survived. Presently the State Parks Department of Oklahoma maintains the house and it is open to the public.

History

Samuel Worcester began the settlement of this area in 1836 when he established the Park Hill Mission here on a hill near the Illinois River. Worcester also constructed houses for the missionaries and teachers, a boarding hall, and a gristmill. In 1837 he brought the first printing press to Oklahoma and began the Park Hill Press which

¹ Glen Fleischmann, The Cherokee Removal, 1838, New York, 1971, p. 3.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Eaton, Rachel Caroline. John Ross and the Cherokee Indians. Menasha, Wisconsin: George Banta Publishing Company, 1914.

Fleischmann, Glen. The Cherokee Removal (1838). New York: Franklin Watts, Inc., 1971.

Luddy, Frederick L. The Cherokee Removal: A Controversy in American History. Copyright Van R. Halsey, Jr., 1961.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE				
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	0	'	"	0	'	"	35°	50'	57"
NE	0	'	"	0	'	"	94°	57'	51"
SE	0	'	"	0	'	"			
SW	0	'	"	0	'	"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: about 5 acres.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: <u>Benjamin Levy, Senior Historian</u>		
ORGANIZATION: <u>Division of Historic and Architectural Surveys, National Park Service</u>	DATE: <u>11/13/73</u>	
STREET AND NUMBER: <u>1100 L Street NW</u>		
CITY OR TOWN: <u>Washington</u>	STATE <u>District of Columbia</u>	
	CODE	

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☐

Name _____

Title _____

Date _____

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Oklahoma	
COUNTY Cherokee	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

8. Significance (page 1)

Murrell House

published religious and educational works in Cherokee and English. The Cherokee Council in 1846 ordered the construction of two high schools. They built the Female Seminary at Park Hill and the Male Seminary close to Tahlequah, but they did not open until 1861.

In the fertile valley to the north of Park Hill the well-to-do developed Southern style plantations. They built large frame houses with wide lawns. Their Negro slaves manned the prosperous estates, raised the crops, and bred fine horses and cattle.

The Murrell House was better known in antebellum Tahlequah as "Hunter's Home" because George Murrell loved the chase and because he entertained Tahlequah society with hunts through the surrounding countryside, followed by grand parties at his home. Murrell's house rivaled only "Rose Cottage" owned by Chief John Ross as the center of the Cherokee society.

George Murrell was the son of a rich Virginia merchant and a partner of Lewis Ross in a mercantile business in Tennessee. He married Ross' daughter, Minerva, and came with the family to Oklahoma in 1840. Murrell built the first brick store in Tahlequah and was the town's first postmaster. When his wife died in 1855, he married her younger sister, Amanda Melvina. They had two daughters and two sons.

With the outbreak of Civil War, Murrell returned to Virginia, raised a cavalry troop, and became a Confederate major. He never returned to live at Park Hill but divided his time between plantations in Virginia and Louisiana.